

## Lincolnshire Police Crime Commissioner's Office - Independent Assurance Panel

### Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) - Lincolnshire Police Approach

#### Chair's Six Monthly Report - March 2023

## **1 Purpose**

The VAWG Independent Assurance Panel is charged with undertaking objective scrutiny to the programme of work relating to VAWG within Lincolnshire Police in depth and from multiple perspectives.

The Panel exists to provide appropriate challenge, ideas and recommendations to generate genuine and positive organisational learning, and to;

- Strengthen and improve public confidence in policing, in matters relating to violence against women and girls, by undertaking an independent examination of the programme of work in Lincolnshire Police.
- Identify initiatives, actions and proposals to improve the programme, whilst respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable.
- Assist the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in holding the Chief Constable to account by scrutinising the Force's plans to address any recommendations made.

This report is being submitted to the PCC, in accordance with the Assurance Panel Terms of Reference, to provide an update on actions to date, initial findings and recommendations.

## **2 Assurance Panel Actions**

### **July 2022**

The Chair met with Lincolnshire Police representatives D/Superintendent Suzanne Davies (Force VAWG Lead) and Sarah Norburn (Domestic Abuse Coordinator), alongside Joanne Davison (OPCC). A full review of Lincolnshire's response to Violence Against Women & Girls was undertaken.

### **July/August 2022**

Eight skilled and experienced volunteer Assurance Panel members recruited and appointed;

Caroline Killeavy (Chair)	CEO, YMCA Lincolnshire
Sharon Walker	We Are With You/Perpetrator Exp/Edan Lincs
Lauren Hall	Lecturer in Criminology, University of Lincoln
Marie-Claire Bretherton	Education Director, Anthem Trust
Celia Madden	CEO, Edan Lincs
Alison Goddard	CEO, Lincolnshire Action Trust Charity
Matthew Morrissey	Probation Service
Tracey Foreman	CEO and Education Principal
Sundari Anitha	Professor of Gender, Violence & Work, University of Lincoln

Terms of Reference and scope of work for the Panel have been agreed and published on the Lincolnshire OPCC website.

### **15<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Inaugural Meeting of the Panel held. Agenda items included;

- Lincolnshire Police VAWG Delivery Group;
  - Review of Attendees
  - Terms of Reference
  - Progress to date
- Force Delivery Plan Priorities v National Framework
- Communication Plan - General Public
- Internal Readiness – Culture/Skills/Expertise
- External Partnership Working
- VAWG Key Performance Indicators

### **8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Panel met for the second time. Agenda items included;

- Lincolnshire Police Problem Data
- Cross Force Collaboration
- Delivery & Strategic Plan “Deep Dive” - Pillar 1 “Build Trust and Confidence”

Presentations were received from Jane Morley, Lincolnshire Police Senior Analyst and Paul Coleman, Professional Standards Department.

### **1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

The Panel met again on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Agenda items included;

- Local Public Confidence Levels
- Internal Force Culture ‘Stock Take’ Audit Results
- Lincolnshire Police VAWG Problem Data Update
- Delivery & Strategic Plan “Deep Dive” – Pillar 3 “Safer Spaces”

Presentations were received from Jemma Peacock, Communications Officer and Gareth Boxall, Chief Inspector (West) and Pillar 3 Tactical Lead, Lincolnshire Police.

### **3 Initial Findings**

The Force has chosen to closely align its plans with the recommendations contained within the College of Policing National VAWG Delivery Framework (Dec 2021) and Outcomes and Performance Framework (April 2022).

An honest assessment had been made of Lincolnshire Police’s position against every element of the National Framework and sensible decisions in relation to priorities, timescales, resources and future actions were all evidenced. The Panel noted planned responses for all recommendations listed under each Pillar of the Framework.

VAWG Lead D/Superintendent Suzanne Davies demonstrated a thorough and impressive understanding of national and local priority areas, and a robust, comprehensive plan was presented that identified key focus areas for Lincolnshire Police.

It was clear that significant consultation within the Force had been undertaken in developing the action plan. In addition an internal VAWG Delivery Group has been established, attended by key tactical and strategic leads across the Force.

The Force benefits significantly from the knowledge and insight of Sarah Norburn (Domestic Abuse Coordinator), currently seconded to the NPCC VAWG National Taskforce. D/Sup Davies and Sarah

Norburn are both able to cite examples of best practice nationally, and in other Forces, that Lincolnshire could replicate/mirror.

Whilst the Assurance Panel has not fully explored all areas of the Force's Strategic and Delivery Plan yet, Panel members have the following initial observations and recommendations;

### **3.1 Strategic Resourcing and Commitment**

Lincolnshire Police appears to be effectively resourcing and prioritising VAWG actions at a senior and strategic level. It is clear that traction is being gained quickly due to the decision to appoint a dedicated senior VAWG Lead.

Lincolnshire Police have published its commitment and plans regarding reducing VAWG offences prominently on its website <https://www.lincs.police.uk/police-forces/lincolnshire-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/violence-against-women-and-girls/>

The dedicated VAWG Lead is working collaboratively across the Force and with community partners. There is evidence of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders being engaged to develop and deliver the VAWG strategic and operational plans.

The Force has benefited considerably from the knowledge and connections generated from the secondment of a Lincolnshire employee to the NPCC VAWG Taskforce.

The Lincolnshire Police Team have welcomed the presence of the VAWG Assurance Panel and have shared/explained information appropriately to ensure the panel are best able to perform their duties.

The Delivery Group is well resourced and appears to be working well. Senior Colleagues across the Force are regarding VAWG as a key area of focus, as demonstrated by their willingness to present at the Panel meetings and share their own operational challenges and plans to overcome them.

### **3.2 Measurement & Impact**

Somewhat understandably the Force has spent considerable some time consolidating and gathering data to fully establish the extent, nature and scope of the problem of VAWG in Lincolnshire. It is of course important for any VAWG programme to be based on a clear success criteria and systems for ongoing monitoring established against benchmarked data.

This exercise has been somewhat frustrated and confused by the recent publication of the National Problem Profile Data set, that were highly restricted in their nature and incomplete. For example, data with regard to violence against girls under the age of 10 years and domestic violence in public places where the perpetrator is known to the victim have not been captured by the national Problem Profile.

The Panel believes that Lincolnshire should not be held back by the lack of useful National data sets or be held back or rely on national initiatives that do not help identify or progress Lincolnshire priorities.

It is understood that a National Performance Pack is to be received shortly that is hoped will enable benchmarking of the current status of VAWG against similar forces.

The Panel has tried to more fully understand the Key Performance Measures established for each stand of the Strategy. Whilst the current plans identify comprehensive sets of actions for each Pillar the Panel is still not clear how success will be measured at a strategic level. The Force should be able to effectively communicate 'what good would look like' in terms of progress and long term aspiration. The Force Team are conscious of the need to develop a streamlined set of strategic KPI's for future measurement, i.e: a 'plan on a page'.

It is not yet clear to the Panel members how areas of public confidence in Lincolnshire Police is to be measured in relation to VAWG. The panel was informed at the last meeting that some locally commissioned research with regard to public levels of confidence and trust was being considered, jointly resourced by OPPC and Lincolnshire Police. This is essential if Lincolnshire Police is to fully understand the task ahead and measure impact going forwards.

### **3.3 Lived Experience & Representation**

It is noted that Lincolnshire Police have established the VAWG 'Voices' Panel, comprising thirty members of the public with VAWG lived experience. The intention is to use this forum to ensure any future initiatives are fit for purpose and appropriately pitched. This new, ground breaking initiative attracted much public interest and support, being promoted widely via social media.

The Panel regard the formation of this forum as a very positive step and indicative of the courageous, relentless commitment of the VAWG Lead to engage those with direct experience and knowledge. The Panel will monitor the success and impact of this initiative with interest as this has the potential to be celebrated as National best practice.

The commitment to engage black and minoritised women/girls is clearly stated in the Force's action plan but the Force Team recognise there is still more to do to set out clearly how this will be done. Further thought is also needed in relation to inclusion of the views of the transgender community.

Much of the Force work to date has been focussed on adult audiences, with some Safer Street initiatives aimed at under 18's in Boston and on the East Coast. The Panel has asked to examine plans for reaching under 18 year audiences at its next meeting.

### **3.4 Internal Culture**

The Panel have seen evidence of senior commitment to improving Force internal culture and ensure the workplace is a more inclusive environment.

The Panel have been impressed by initiatives such as the 'Bad Apple' anonymous reporting mechanism to report misogynistic or challenging behaviours internally, and the *Speak Out Now* intranet video. Since the launch of these local initiatives two members of staff have felt comfortable in coming forward with concerns. Panel members believe initiatives such as these are demonstrating good leadership and will reinforce a culture of zero tolerance internally.

Work is underway to analyse the results of the 2023 internal Culture 'Stock Take', in relation to cultural behaviours that may prevent the progress or impact of the VAWG programme.

### **3.5 Public Confidence**

There is evidence that its external communication strategies are prioritising the promotion of public confidence (Street Safe, Enough social media campaign, promotion of the Hollie Guard App). The panel received an excellent comprehensive presentation in relation to a variety of communication strategies and were assured of strategic focus in this area. Significant impact/reach was noted by the Panel in relation to the Force's recent social media VAWG related campaigns.

Whilst the adoption of the above excellent programmes show commitment, the panel feel that the Force needs to act as "Thought Leader" in the VAWG space by publishing real local data with regard to crime statistics, crime reduction success, and being open about internal challenges in the local Force or national matters may further boost confidence levels, both within the Force and amongst the general public.

In addition, whilst there is evidence of a willingness to acknowledge and tackle misogyny and sexism within the police force, this commitment is not being conveyed outside the institution strongly or

frequently enough to the wider community. This could be due to a certain fear of criticism that comes with acknowledging prevalence, particularly in a climate when other forces are under some public scrutiny. The panel believe a proactive, honest stance by Lincolnshire Police in the community will be helpful to shift perceptions, and to signal an intent to achieve actual change.

The panel believe the force should continue to publically utilise the VAWG lead as spokesperson for the Force in relation to VAWG matters. The panel also believes there is value to more actively seeking out opportunities for them to publically act as a 'thought leader' in this area, not only from a policing perspective but in the wider Lincolnshire community context.

#### **4 Assurance Panel Recommendations**

- *The Force has an opportunity to break new ground by developing its own 'Lincolnshire VAWG Problem Profile,' with more localised datasets, which go above and beyond what is required by the Home Office. An example of this is the monitoring of the use of Protection Orders, which it is believed the VAWG team have now actioned. The Assurance Panel recommend a strategic plan be developed that clearly sets out what data is required in Lincolnshire to assist decision making in relation to VAWG and develops and investment plan to obtain this data over a number of years. Commissioning local research or data collection exercises may be necessary but the Panel do not feel that relying on National Data sets will be sufficient in determining Lincolnshire's needs.*
- *It is recommended that the Force develops strategic success criteria in relation to VAWG and associated KPI's/ measures/benchmarks in order to simply demonstrate impact internally and to the general public. The Panel recommends that the Force considers publishing these KPI's and reports its progress against these KPI's to the public regularly and transparently.*
- *It is recommended that a benchmark of public confidence levels and trust is established, and appropriate KPI is established relating to public confidence. Success in this area is so fundamental to encouraging the reporting of crime that the commissioning of this research should be a priority. The Panel recommends that significant thought is given to ensuring any survey commissioned identifies any geographical, age and cultural differences in levels of public trust, which may be due to differences in policing, social challenges or historical relationships.*
- *The Panel recognise the huge amount of work already undertaken and underway in relation to VAWG by Lincolnshire Police and has been assured of the commitment to ensuring the voices of a wide range of women and girls are heard. The panel recommends that further thought is given to how engagement with minoritised groups, victims of crime (at the time of the investigation) and under 18 year olds will be developed over the coming months, specifically in relation to VAWG matters.*
- *The Force considers publication of crime statistics/crime reduction success in relation to VAWG – a summarised version of the Performance Pack would demonstrate transparency and enable the Force to speak more widely about the range of work underway.*
- *The Panel recommend that Communication Team more clearly identify key audiences in their strategy and select tools appropriate to reaching these audiences more selectively. There is a slight concern that Lincolnshire Police adopt all national campaigns locally resulting in 'campaign overload'. Much of the current communication work is conducted via social media and this will not reach those less hard to reach audiences.*

## **5 Summary**

In summary the Panel have been impressed by the rigorous and expert manner in which the Lincolnshire Police VAWG Plan has been developed and implemented across the Force. Panel members accept that there is still much to do to embed a newly focussed culture, new systems, new reporting and measurement mechanisms, but the progress made to date should be applauded.

The Panel wishes to record its appreciation of the time and input from D/Superintendent Suzanne Davies and Sarah Norburn from Lincolnshire police for their open and constructive manner in which they have welcomed the presence of the Assurance Panel.

The Panel also wishes to record its appreciation of the administrative support received from Katie Nicholls in the OPCC team, and for the helpful attendance and valuable input of the OPCC Director of Strategy of Operations, Joanne Davison.

**Caroline Killeavy**  
**Chair - Lincolnshire VAWG Independent Assurance Panel**

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

Ends